

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4950

### 1. Name

Historic 256 – 260 North Bruce Street  
and / common

### 2. Location

street & number 256 – 260 North Bruce Street  
city, town Baltimore  
state & zip code Maryland 21205 county

### 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property

name  
street & number telephone  
city, town state & zip code

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber  
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio  
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title  
date federal state county local  
depository for survey records  
city, town state & zip code

## 7. Description

**Condition**

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☒ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

**Check One**

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

**Check One**

☒ original site  
☐ moved:  
date of move: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This row of three two-story, two-bay wide late Italianate-style brick houses with shed roofs and wooden cornices were built c. 1885 – 1890 and are typical of a type of house built particularly in southwest Baltimore where the house is only two rooms deep but sits on a high basement, containing the kitchen. All of the houses retain their original brick facades, which were always painted.

The houses are two stories in height, 12' wide, and occupy lots 55' deep. Each house is two rooms deep and there is no back building. The houses sit on very high basements, where the kitchen is located. The houses are constructed in running bond and have been painted. Each house has a single hooded chimney located at the rear corner of the house. The shed roof is capped by a simple wooden cornice consisting of a crown molding set above a frieze area decorated with small, horizontally-grooved modillions. The lower edge of the frieze panel is bordered by a cut-work band of scallop shapes.

The façade show particularly fine brickwork in the segmentally arched brick lintels, with scroll-sawn tympanums. The sills are brick. The builder attempted to give a particularly fashionable look to the façade by placing two tall and narrow windows on the first floor—either to give the effect of a three-bay, main street house, or to imitate the effect of the paired first floor windows in the row directly across the street. All windows have 1/1 sash or are boarded over. Doorways have single-light transoms but no original doors remain. The houses sit on very high basements lit by two single-light sashes with wood lintels, set directly beneath the two narrow windows on the first floor. There is also an entrance to the basement kitchen at the front of the house, a few steps down from the sidewalk. The front door is reached by eight wood or metal steps, set parallel to the façade.

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## 8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

**Specific dates** c. 1885 - 1890

**Builder/Architect**

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This group of houses significant as representing the level of architectural stylishness builders were willing to give to small street houses in the late nineteenth century and is testament to the fact that there was no stigma attached to small street living. They represent a form of house particular to southwest Baltimore—only two rooms deep with the kitchen located in the basement—a design that allowed builders to build on much shorter lots. The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods of the period c. 1870 to 1910. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of house sizes (and prices) in the new neighborhoods going up to serve the expanding factory districts ringing the harbor and northeast and southwest of the central city. Builders acquired anywhere from an eighth to a half of a city block and built 14' to 15'-wide three-bay-wide, two-story houses on the main streets, and smaller, 11' to 13'-wide two-bay-wide, two-story houses on the narrower streets bisecting the blocks. Typically, in this period, main street houses might sell for \$1,200 - \$1,500; small street houses for \$700 - \$900.

Occasionally, the builder retained ownership of his small street houses to provide income for himself as rental properties. In this way people of varying means could afford to live in the same block. If they couldn't afford the approximately \$750 purchase price of the small street houses, then they *could* afford the \$8 or so a month it would cost to rent one, while they saved to be able to buy their own home later.

The houses are especially significant because of their proximity to the slaughterhouses of southwest Baltimore and their related industries, particularly the William Wilkens & Co. Curled Hair Manufactory, one of the largest employers in the area. A number of German-American owned breweries were also located in this section of the city. Moderately-priced housing was built to provide homes for the mainly German immigrants who came to southwest Baltimore to work in these rapidly expanding industries in the decades after the Civil War.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*  
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

## 10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

## 11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

city, town Baltimore

date

telephone

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of rights.

Return to:

DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023



256-260 N. Bruce St  
BALTO, MD

175

185

20

170

147

170

148

185<sup>4</sup>

16A

LANDOWNE

ST.

PENROSE 163 AVE<sup>e</sup> 80

AVE 60

185

170

153

177

**N. MONROE**

ST. 178

**N. FULTON**

# Y MOUNT

GARRETT  
PARK  
M.E. CH

150

160

140

194

GERMAN

17.5

66

66

(28)

156 10k

156106

156.10%

[illegible]



B-4950

256-260 N.

Bruce St.

BALTO. MD

W. Nield

6/00

MOSHPO 1/2





B-4450

256 N. Bruce St.

BACTO. MD

W. Nield

6/00

MD SAPD

2/2